

Memorandum



Henault

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DATE : May 27, 1977
TO : Bob Sheehan
FROM : Pete Henault
SUBJECT : PCB's

In response to your request of last January (Memo, Sheehan to Henault, "PCB", January 14, 1977), we have been researching the environmental acceptability of PCB alternatives. Because of the conservation program and 9th Floor brush fires, this has not been a high priority effort with us. We have, however, spent a good deal of time on it during the past month.

At first we got no where. The local office of EPA told us that little was being done except by the vendors and that the toxicologist here in Seattle was as well informed on the subject as anyone. We kept calling around and finally found somebody at EPA headquarters in Washington who was more knowledgeable and referred us to various vendors.

The state of our knowledge at this time is summarized in the attached memorandum from Maura O'Neill to me. *Please note that the Westinghouse product "WEMCOL", which I understand we have purchased the most of, appears to be unacceptable. The other substitutes which we have purchased, "Dielektrol II" and "Selectrol I", appear to be acceptable.*

Our research is not yet complete and we will keep you posted on further progress.

On a related PCB issue, we were notified this week by the local EPA office that the results of samples taken from the well at the Bothell substation indicate PCB levels of 1 ppb. *This is not a hazardous level.* The present FDA standard is 5 ppm. Tests, however, have shown that small mammal reproduction and other classic signs such as the thinning of eggshells, etc. stop at PCB concentrations of 1 ppm. The chief toxicologist at the EPA Research Center in Eugene, Oregon, states that because fish are such excellent bioaccumulators, no concentration of PCB's is too small to be harmless.

Our conclusion is that the evidence of PCB's in the domestic water supply at the Bothell substation is not a health hazard but does demand our serious attention and should be monitored. Concentration following periods of low use, such as after a holiday weekend, are likely to be significantly higher than 1 ppb.

Bob Sheehan
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The information on the Bothell substation came from Dennis Stefani of EPA, one of our contact people there. He stated that he would be sending us confirmation in writing soon. By copy of this memo, I am referring the matter to Lee Peha for further action, if such action is desirable.

PH:ea
Attachment

cc: Recchi
Walker
Hunich
Coe
Peha
Mandapat
O'Neill
Wiess
File

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